

**REMARKS**

Claims 1, 3, 4 and 6-19 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, claims 1, 3, 4 and 6 are amended. The amendments introduce no new matter. Claims 2 and 5 are canceled without prejudice to, or disclaimer of, the subject matter recited in those claims. A Request for Continued Examination is attached. Reconsideration of the application based on the above amendments and the following remarks is respectfully requested.

The Office Action rejects claims 1-9 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) over HMM Size Reduction Using MDL Criterion, Japan, March 2002 by Shinoda et al. (hereinafter "Shinoda"). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

The Office Action alleges that Shinoda's page 2, section 3, lines 1 and 2, and page 1, lines 19-23, disclose features that are considered to correspond to those recited in now-canceled claim 5. This assertion is incorrect. The cited portions of Shinoda cannot reasonably be considered to disclose features corresponding to, for example, obtaining a set of respective training speech data  $\chi^N$  by matching in time series a plurality of the training speech data with respective states of an HMM having any one of the Gaussian distribution numbers from the predetermined value to the maximum distribution number; and computing a description length for each of the plurality of states having the plural types of Gaussian distribution numbers using a Minimum Description Length criterion applied to the data  $\chi^N$ .

Attributes of the above features with respect to an exemplary alignment operation are described, for example, in paragraphs [0057]-[0062] of Applicants' disclosure, as filed. Page 2, section 3, lines 1 and 2 of Shinoda relate to only to data generally, and page 1, lines 19-23 merely outline Shinoda's general approach. There is no teaching or suggestion of an alignment operation with features as recited in claim 1.

For at least the above reasons, the applied reference cannot reasonably be considered to teach the combination of features positively recited in independent claim 1. Additionally,

claims 3, 4 and 6-9 are also not taught by the applied reference for at least the respective dependence of these claims, directly or indirectly, on an allowable base claim, as well as for the separately patentable subject matter that each of these claims recites.

Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of claims 1, 3, 4 and 6-9 are respectfully requested.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of claims 1, 3, 4 and 6-9 are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



James A. Oliff  
Registration No. 27,075

James E. Golladay, II  
Registration No. 58,182

JAO:JEG/clf

Attachment:  
Request for Continued Examination

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**OLIFF & BERRIDGE, PLC**  
**P.O. Box 320850**  
**Alexandria, Virginia 22320-4850**  
**Telephone: (703) 836-6400**

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